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CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 73 No. 3

June 2021

READY RESILIENT REFORM

**ACHIEVING AFRC'S
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**



Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



CHANGE...

“To fly, fight, and win... Airpower anytime, anywhere.

- United States Air Force Mission Statement”

Heroes of the Air Force Reserve:

Change is inevitable. Change is uncertain. Change may be uncomfortable. However, it is often necessary because the risks of complacency are too great. In April, the Chief of Staff unveiled the Air Force's new mission statement. These eight words are a mandate to continue our journey as an institution because, as Airmen, we understand that good enough today will inevitably fail in tomorrow's security environment.

We face changes driven by our adversaries, our environment and our resource constraints. As we change, we carry with us a legacy passed from one generation of Reserve Citizen Airmen to the next.

The most significant structural change to the Department of Defense in generations, the establishment of the United States Space Force, is a response to the changing nature of the security environment. The assumption of space as an uncontested domain, with our assets benefitting from being on the ultimate high ground, is being challenged. In response, our nation set about to build an optimized service dedicated to ensuring the safety, stability and security of outer space activities.

As a department, we have gradually shifted our focus from the counterinsurgency missions that dominated the early part of this century toward great power competition. To that end, we have started retooling our training and readiness efforts to ensure we are able to operate in contested environments against near peer adversaries.

The skillsets necessary to fly, fight and win in these environments

are different than those needed in counterinsurgency operations. As our focus shifts, we will continue supporting the counterinsurgency mission set by providing valuable strategic surge capacity.

The environment has hastened our operational tempo. 2020 saw the busiest Atlantic hurricane season on record. We witnessed three of the four largest wildfires in California's history and stood shoulder to shoulder with the Air National Guard and other partners at the state and local levels to fight them. We did all of this during the deadliest pandemic in a century.

To provide a framework for operational planning in this environment, our basic doctrine was rewritten and published in April. The revision incorporates the service's strategic approach to *Accelerate Change or Lose*. It focuses on an approach to airpower that is centered on Airmen, returning to the concept of mission command in which mission execution is guided by commander's intent. The rewrite codifies many of the best practices we have already incorporated as a command, enabling us to better harness Airmen's innovation.

When we are faced with change, it is reassuring to focus on what remains the same. When disaster strikes, Reserve Citizen Airmen volunteer to go into danger to take care of their fellow Americans. When our nation faces adversaries that have studied us for decades, we adapt with new capabilities and doctrine. When we face threats in a new domain, we organize, train and equip to win. Finally, when we took an oath to become an Airman, we joined a family and will always remain Airmen.

About three years ago, I was asked to be the keynote speaker at a squadron centennial. That evening, I had the privilege of speaking with squadron veterans from every generation of Airmen since World War II. This squadron had flown P-40s, P-51s, F-86s, F-101s, F-4s, A-10s, F-16s, MQ-1s and MQ-9s during the eras in which the audience had served.

An event organizer told me an incredible story about the process of locating each of the squadron alumni. One evening, after an entire weekend of cold calling numbers from phone rosters that hadn't been updated in decades, a volunteer made contact with the widow of one of the squadron's pilots from World War II. She explained to the volunteer how she was so glad to hear from the squadron, because her husband's former commander would send her a Christmas card every year until his passing. He had done this from 1945 up until 2013.

Taking an oath and becoming an Airman is something that has permanence. It means that for whatever time each of you chooses to serve with us, you inherit a legacy of patriotism, innovation, courage and camaraderie that spans generations. Airpower has never been about the platform, but about the people who boldly harness the winds of change to deliver it.

The Command Chief and I are proud to serve with each of you and look forward to the future that resilient leaders bring to every corner of the Air Force Reserve.

RICHARD W. SCOBEE
Lieutenant General, USAF
Chief of Air Force Reserve
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command



EMBRACE CHANGE ... OR BE LEFT BEHIND

Citizen Airmen:

In this edition, the boss and I decided to touch on a very complex topic: change. Either you love it, hate it or just try to roll with it. It is a billion dollar industry with books, articles and podcasts all hoping to educate and coach us on how to cope, handle or even lead change. One thing is certain, if you don't embrace it and learn to evolve with the change, you will be left behind.

It's difficult; I get it. We are creatures of habit and many of us are accustomed to our own comfortable ways or upbringings, but the Air Force is evolving, the world is evolving and, most importantly, our culture is evolving. We are in the midst of some of the biggest changes this century has ever seen.

This past year has been one for the books. Our entire world as we knew it changed overnight one day last March and here we are a year later still not back to normal. COVID has changed us and the way we will operate in the future, even in the Air Force Reserve.

We have adapted to telework, and it is here to stay. We have perfected the virtual meeting, and we had to get creative with how we connect with each other on a daily basis. The pandemic has even altered our personal lives. For the past year, we were confined to our homes with very little social interaction, and that can change people. As we slowly return to normal, we must realize the transition might not be easy for everyone; be a good wingman and check in on your family and friends.

The rise of social media this past decade has changed the way we communicate. When I joined the Air Force Reserve more than 31 years ago, we received information from our supervisors, who received information from their supervisors and so on. Now, we all receive information at the same time whether it's from a social media post or an email. We, as leaders, need to be comfortable with this.

We live in a fast-paced, digital era, and we must keep up. We now have direct access to our most senior leaders and elected officials of this country, and we've learned over the past few years that what you say and do online has real consequences. Please embrace this change, but also be cognizant of the permanent digital footprint you are creating.

Lastly, I want to discuss one of the most impactful and important changes happening as we speak in the Air Force Reserve - the culture change. The way we work, interact with Airmen and treat one another is changing before our eyes, and it's about time.



Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee and Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White tour the 910th Airlift Wing Modular Aerial Spray System facility at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, during a recent unit visit. In their commentaries in this issue of Citizen Airman, Scobee and White address the importance of effectively dealing with change. (Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Grossi)

As a young Airman, I remember being told to never openly discuss social issues surrounding race, religion, national origin or sexual orientation in the workplace, because it had the potential of exposing differences. Now, we openly discuss and celebrate our differences and strive to create an environment of inclusivity. I say this time and time again: the only way we will make our organizations better is to surround ourselves with people who think differently than us.

They catch our blind spots, offer a different perspective and add valuable insight. At the end of the day, we might not like the same football team or share the same political views, but we must be respectful and open to people who are different from us.

The boss and I are honored to serve you and your families during this historic period of change. Thank you for taking it head on, being resilient and adapting to it so we come out better on the other side.

TIMOTHY C. WHITE JR.
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF
Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Air Force Reserve
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command

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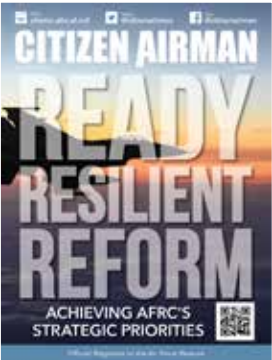


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ON THE COVER:

In this issue of Citizen Airman, we take an in-depth look at how Air Force Reserve Command is progressing on its three strategic priorities -- prioritize strategic depth and accelerate readiness, develop resilient leaders, and reform the organization. See the story on page 6. (Original photo by Senior Airman Mary Begy, text overlay and gradient techniques added by Anthony Burns)



Chief of Air Force Reserve's
Strategic Priorities



Priority 1: Prioritize strategic depth
and accelerate readiness
#ReserveReady



Priority 2: Develop resilient leaders
#ReserveResilient



Priority 3: Reform the organization
#ReserveReform

Look for these icons for stories that
focus on these three priorities.

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Firefighters from the 919th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron and 1st SOCES extinguish a controlled flame at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The simulated aircraft burn is an upgrade training requirement to reach a five-skill level in the firefighting career field.

CITIZEN AIRMAN

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Reviewing the command's progress on its three strategic priorities showcases innovation

By Bo Joyner



Not long after Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee became the commander of Air Force Reserve Command and chief of the Air Force Reserve more than two years ago, he announced his three strategic priorities for the command: prioritize strategic depth and accelerate readiness, develop resilient leaders, and reform the organization.

“As a command team, improving the lives of Reserve Citizen Airmen has been our guiding principle from day one,” Scobee said. “To that end, the command chief (Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White) and I established our strategic priorities. I’m proud of the progress we have made and am grateful for the work you do every day to move the command forward in these three areas. As we move further into 2021, we will continue to accelerate our actions to achieve our objectives, setting our strategic priorities up for long-term sustainment.”

Scobee said the Chief of Staff of the Air Force’s recent paper *Accelerate Change or Lose* presents an indisputable case for change, and the Reserve’s strategic priorities are in lock step with those of the Air Force and all Total Force partners.

We recently sat down for interviews with the command’s three strategic priority champions. Over the next few pages, we’ll take a look at the progress AFRC has made in each of

these areas and what the champions are currently working on to make sure the command keeps advancing all of its strategic priorities.



As AFRC’s director of Air, Space and Information Operations (A3), Brig. Gen. Derin Durham is the champion for the command’s Prioritize Strategic Depth and Accelerate Readiness strategic priority – an effort that speaks directly to the Reserve’s reason for being.

“The mission of the Air Force Reserve is to provide strategic depth and operational support to the Joint Force,” Scobee said.



Left, Maj. Rebecca Sullivan, a KC-10 Extender pilot from the 349th Air Mobility Wing prepares to deliver fuel to F-15s during Exercise Nexus Dawn in California, in April. Through exercises like Nexus Dawn, Reserve Citizen Airmen hone their readiness so they can support the nation with air power anytime, anywhere. (Airman 1st Class Brady Penn) Right, Airman Nicole Corp and Senior Airman Gabriela Knudson, command support staff Reservists in the 419th Maintenance Group, sharpen their ability-to-survive-to-operate skills during a readiness exercise at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. (Senior Airman Anthony Pham)



“Our Reserve Citizen Airmen and squadrons must be lethal, combat-ready forces. We have to prioritize strategic depth and accelerate readiness to guarantee we can execute today’s missions and triumph in tomorrow’s fight.”

Durham’s team of subject matter experts from across all functional areas throughout the command is focusing its efforts on three main objectives.

“Goal No. 1 for us is to prioritize strategic depth and we’re attacking that by developing an analytic tool that will allow our functional area and career field managers to identify bottlenecks, roadblocks and limiting factors to healthy strategic depth within each career field,” he said. “We will then be able to apply targeted corrective action by Air Force Specialty Code to improve and strengthen our strategic depth.”

The team’s second goal is accelerating readiness. “To meet this objective, we are developing a unit-level analytic tool that will help us identify areas of need and target our resources to improve our ability to answer present requirements and requests for support from the regular Air Force and combatant commanders.”

Durham’s third objective involves a strategic training plan for the command. “The goal is to align our unit-level training and major command-level participation and hosting of major exercises with the Air Force’s new Force Generation model. We’re looking at ensuring high effectiveness for every training and exercise slot utilized by prioritizing units to the appropriate training at the appropriate time in the Force Generation cycle.”

The command has made significant strides in terms of prioritizing strategic depth and accelerating readiness since

Scobee assumed command in 2018. One of the command’s main focus areas under this strategic priority has been to convert about 1,200 Air Reserve Technician positions to Active Guard/Reserve positions.

“Converting select ART positions to AGR positions enables us to fill vacancies in a more timely manner,” Scobee said. “The AGR hiring process is not only faster than the civilian hiring process, it is also much simpler for both the hiring authority and the applicant. The end result is a decrease in the number and duration of vacancies and an increase in unit readiness, cohesion and morale.”

The command has also made significant improvements in terms of medical readiness and its associated processes and programs. When Scobee assumed command, AFRC had a backlog of more than 2,000 cases awaiting medical review. Within a year that backlog was gone and the command’s medical review timeline has been reduced to less than 14 days.

This issue of *Citizen Airman* magazine features several stories focused on how Reserve Citizen Airmen and units are working to accelerate readiness. On page 22, for example, is a story on how Reservists from the 433rd Airlift Wing, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, answered the call to deliver critical COVID-19 medical supplies to India. On page 26 is a story on how maintainers from the 919th Special Operations Wing, Duke Field, Florida, are using an innovative new program to enhance readiness and deliver expert aircraft maintenance in smaller crews, at a smaller cost to the Air Force.

2 DEVELOP • RESILIENT • LEADERS

Defining exactly what constitutes a resilient leader can be tricky. Scobee recently expounded on what he thinks makes a resilient leader.

A resilient leader is “someone who has a high degree of emotional intelligence at all levels, as technical competence alone will not guarantee our future success,” he said. “Emotionally intelligent leaders are highly motivated and inspire those around them to overcome adversity. They have a high degree of self-awareness, recognizing their own limitations and blind spots. They are guided by empathy, aware of how their interactions affect those around them. Finally, they have the social skills necessary to build resilient teams based on mutual trust. Each of these components of emotional intelligence is essential to leading in the Air Force Reserve.”

Brig. Gen. Tanya Kubinec, the champion for AFRC’s Develop Resilient Leaders strategic priority, has assembled a team of about 50 experts from across the command to help her carry out her strategy for growing resilient Reserve leaders at all levels.

“We’ve centered our strategy around two main goals – Educate and Engage,” Kubinec, the mobilization assistant to Scobee in his role as AFRC commander, said during a recent interview. “Our focus is on promoting both professional and personal resilience for all of our Airmen and their families, with a special emphasis on resilience in the digital age.”



Laura Nimmo, 919th Special Operations Wing Key Spouse mentor, attends Key Spouse training coordinated by the Airman and Family Readiness Center at Duke Field, Florida. Programs like Key Spouse are designed to help build resiliency and unit cohesion. (Senior Airman Dylan Gentile)

Under the education umbrella, Kubinec’s team is focused on accelerating readiness through a continuum of learning that will last throughout a Reservist’s career, applicable to Aimen of all generations.

“Of course, our first step is to study the current state of resiliency in the command,” Kubinec said. “We use the SWOT strategic planning technique to determine our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We’re also developing a resilience health diagnostics model to measure the effectiveness of our Educate and Engage goal actions.”

The general said one of her team’s objectives under the education goal is to deliver digital-age learning to Reservists.

“There is a correlation between screen time and resilience and we want our people to be smart about device usage and to be aware of the 24/7 domestic and foreign threats,” she said. Kubinec’s team is launching an “on-device, on-demand” application, updated monthly, providing digital force protection and resiliency development materials available to all AFRC Airmen at the touch of a button.

“Our phones and other electronic devices can be very addictive. Couple that with the social isolation being caused by the COVID pandemic, and it could be a recipe for disaster,” she said. “A lot of the research indicates that personal, human connection is a critical component of resiliency. That’s why we’re organizing, guiding and empowering our network of resilience professionals, that includes our commanders, chiefs and first sergeants. Our plan includes training, education and capability to ‘connect the network’ so people can connect personally with others and help build resilience throughout the command.”

Kubinec said her team’s main focus under its goal of engagement is to strengthen AFRC’s warrior ethos and its resilience network.

“In the Special Operations world, they have something called POTFF – preservation of the force and family – where they



Tech. Sgt. Raymond Chan, 439th Airlift Wing religious affairs airman and Capt. Matthew Thompson, 439th Airlift Wing chaplain, prepare to visit Airmen during a recent Unit Training Assembly at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts. Religious support teams help promote resilience at Reserve locations. (Tech. Sgt. Shane M. Phipps)

embed helping professionals within the squadrons, and we’re benchmarking off that as much as we can,” she said. “When the helping professionals – chaplains, first sergeants, health providers, exercise physiologists, religious support teams – are embedded in the same place with the Airmen, that’s how the difference is made. When someone is at their worst, they are least likely to ask for help. If they have to look up a phone number and talk to someone they’ve never met before, that can be a bridge too far. But if there is someone present in the unit they have already built trust with who understands the mission and challenges faced by that Airman, they will go to them for help.”

AFRC has already achieved success along these lines.

“We have worked on getting the necessary manpower authorizations to provide more full-time chaplains and first sergeants,” White said recently. “We are in the process of building out our religious support teams across our host unit wings to provide full-time support to the spiritual fitness pillar. We are also finalizing our hiring for full-time first sergeants, who will serve as our local Comprehensive Airman Fitness champions, helping Reserve Citizen Airmen access helping services, regardless of their status. We have also worked on refining our Key Spouse program, which helps to build connections between our Reserve Citizen Airmen’s families and their units.”

There are great examples of resilient leaders throughout Air Force Reserve Command. In this issue of *Citizen Airman* magazine, we highlight Col. Isaac Davidson’s personal story of resilience on page 12. Davidson is AFRC’s Developing Resilient Leaders chief of strategy. We also feature two senior Airmen assigned to the 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, who are breaking barriers in the security forces career field. Their story is on page 15.

3 REFORM THE ORGANIZATION

As the champion for AFRC’s Reform the Organization strategic priority, Brig. Gen. William Kountz knows you can’t have reformation without good information. To that end, Kountz, the command’s director of Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection (A4), is leading a team focused on reforming the organization by harnessing data and business analytics.

“When a lot of people hear the words ‘reform the organization,’ the first thing they think of is a new org chart, but that’s not what it’s really about,” he said during a recent interview. “Reforming the organization is really about improving the way the organization operates and makes decisions. And the driving function behind that is data analysis.”

The general said his team is focusing its efforts on three main goals: establishing a shared data environment, developing business analytics and creating a business intelligence suite.

“Our first goal is to create a shared data environment inside of AFRC so that we have a data warehouse instead of a data lake,” he said. “It’s critical that all our data comes from authoritative data bases and it’s just as important that it’s easily accessible.”

Kountz said part of creating a shared data environment is building a data science center of excellence to discover and determine the scope and impact of data products and tools.

From there, the next step is to develop the necessary capacity (personnel) and capability (training and tools) to leverage a shared data environment into actionable, data-driven decision support for AFRC leaders.

“The shared data environment has various tiers of users,” Kountz said. “You have people like me who are just going to take the data that is gathered and presented and make a decision. Then, there is a mid-tier user who is more oriented to model building and using the various tools to make the presentation visible to someone like myself. And finally, you have the highest tier of user – the experts who make sure we are properly using the tools and the data. We are going to define what these tiers are, and we are going to define what training is needed for each tier. The ultimate step is to start building models to get after our biggest problems and make those models available to decision makers at the highest level.”

Kountz’s team has already started working on building models around some of AFRC’s biggest challenges.

“We’re building a Functional Area Manager toolkit to give our FAMs the opportunity to have access to authoritative data to make the right decisions about readiness,” he said. “We’re working on a model to look at financial management data to better execute our budget in the execution year and prioritize



Staff Sgt. David Greenwood, 926th Security Forces Squadron training instructor, uses virtual reality during training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Throughout Air Force Reserve Command, Reservists are embracing new technologies to reform the organization. (Senior Airman Brett Clashman)

the money we have in real time with current data so that we make the best decisions on prioritization of funding and other resources across the command.

“We are going to look at medical readiness – another big one that impacts our Airmen and our unit readiness. We are going to create models to show where we are in terms of medical readiness, and therefore, overall readiness.”

Kountz said the models and toolkits his team are working on are in lockstep with Scobee’s other strategic priorities. “A lot of the things we are working on right now are centered around readiness, but we are also looking at what can we model about our Airmen’s resiliency. That one is going to take a while, but we’re trying to see where the data makes sense.”

The general has assembled a team of experts from across AFRC to assist in the reforming the organization effort, including a host of people from the Directorate of Analyses, Lessons Learned and Continuous Process Improvement (A9) and the Cyberspace and Technology Directorate (A6).

“This is a huge project that, in the end, will make the Reserve Command better,” he said. “We will end up reforming the organization because we will have the information and the data we need to make more informed decisions.”

While Kountz’s team is focusing on data collection and business analytics to help reform the organization, there are reformation efforts taking place throughout Air Force Reserve Command.

For example, Reserve Citizen Airmen are heavily involved in the Fighter Optimization eXperiment (FOX), a project that seeks to rapidly integrate advanced software and hardware

technologies to maximize the F-35’s lethality and survivability, while also creating an agile development test tool and fielded combat multiplier for all Department of Defense aircraft. For more on FOX, see the story on page 28.

Also under the command’s reform the organization umbrella, AFRC recently established an IMA working group to thoroughly examine the individual mobilization augmentee program. The group’s focus is to ensure IMAs receive proper administrative control and support to meet guidance established by the National Defense Strategy and Department of Air Force leaders.

The Reserve is also undertaking a travel pay reform initiative to evaluate and improve the command’s travel pay process from beginning to end. Under the travel pay reform initiative, AFRC and Kessel Run recently kicked off a new software development program to simplify and update the user interface of the Air Force Reserve’s Unit Training Assembly Personnel System (UTAPS) and its Air Reserve Order Writing System – Reserve (AROWS-R).

Scobee said Reserve Citizen Airmen are uniquely qualified to help reform the organization because of their connections to the civilian sector.

“One of the greatest strengths of the Air Force Reserve is the diverse experience that Reservists bring from their civilian employers,” he said. “These experiences help us to infuse best practices from industry, especially in areas like talent management, financial operations, medical readiness, space and cyberspace.” #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient #ReserveReform ■

Nexus Dawn

Exercise provides Reservists vital training and readiness tests in spite of pandemic

By Staff Sgt. Ryan Green

Reserve Citizen Airmen traveled to multiple military installations in California in April to take part in their units’ first major West Coast readiness exercise since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exercise Nexus Dawn, which took place April 26-28, was designed to safely test the ability of certain Air Force Reserve units to generate, employ and sustain air operations in a simulated contested, degraded and operationally limited environment.

Planning for the readiness exercise started in May 2019. Despite the onset of the pandemic, inspections teams from the 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, California, and the 446th Airlift Wing from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, pressed forward with their plans to create a robust test of units’ combat readiness, adopting precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along the way.

“COVID-19 evolved into planning factors not just for the players but for the planners,” said Lt. Col. Gerard Guevara, director of inspections for the 349th AMW. “Avoiding the spread of the virus also became an exercise objective. Attention was given to occupancy of vehicles for transportation, numbers of players in one area at a time, work center sanitation and mask wearing at all times.”

During the exercise, Reserve Citizen Airmen were presented with a series of realistic and challenging missions, including aeromedical evacuation, airlift of cargo and personnel, aerial refueling, deployment processing, aerial port operations, and command and control.

Coordinating the exercise over the course of nearly two years, especially 2020, presented significant challenges for the primary planners who are stationed 720 miles apart. Ultimately, their commitment to a shared mission and vision, and their embrace of new technology and processes bridged the physical gap.

“Besides select site visits, planning was done remotely, which allowed opportunities to explore new communication platforms,” said Guevara.

“This whole platform was built upon relationships and goodwill between wings and within them.”

Reservists from Travis and Beale Air Force Bases, as well as March Air Reserve Base, all in California, took part in the exercise. They were joined by fellow Fourth Air Force units at Lewis-McChord, McConnell AFB, Kansas, and Dover AFB, Delaware. The California Air National Guard’s 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno contributed combat air forces to the scenarios, and active-duty Marines from Camp Pendleton added a joint force element.

“This exercise highlighted that our Reserve Citizen Airmen need experiences like this to get better at their jobs, and to be able to provide airpower anytime, anywhere,” said Guevara. “And we owe that to them and the American public, despite limitations of this pandemic.” #ReserveReady

(Green is assigned to the 349th AMW public affairs office.) ■



Left, Maj. Kenneth Strunk, 446th Airlift Wing, receives patient manifest updates prior to departing Travis Air Force Base, California, aboard a C-17 Globemaster III as part of Exercise Nexus Dawn. (Dennis Santarinala). Right, Senior Airman Cedrick Kern and Airman 1st Class Essence Campbell of the 752nd Medical Squadron take part in a medical training scenario during the exercise. (Staff Sergeant Ryan Green)





Col. Isaac Davidson and his wife, Lidia, hold a photo of Isaac's brother, Jaime, embracing his mother, Shirley. Jaime was recently released after spending 29 years in some of the toughest federal prisons in the country. (Bo Joyner)

Where do you find resilience?

For Col. Isaac Davidson, it's a combination of faith and family

As Air Force Reserve Command's Developing Resilient Leaders chief of strategy, Col. Isaac Davidson has conducted considerable research into what makes a resilient Airman ... including a lot of introspection into what has helped him overcome some extremely difficult times in his own life.

Born and raised in the Central American country of Panama, Davidson came to the United States in 1979 at the age of 16 along with his two younger brothers and a younger sister. His dad immigrated to America a few years before, and once he had saved enough money, sent for his wife and then his kids to join him in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1983, Isaac enlisted in the Air Force. Rising in the

ranks to technical sergeant, he earned his commission in 1991 and embarked on a new career as an officer. His brother, Rogelio, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1982, serving 32 years and retiring as the Department of the Army's Inspector General Sergeant Major; and his sister, Damaris, served 30 years total in the Army as a Reservist in different statuses and attained the rank of staff sergeant. Youngest brother Jaime, six years younger than Isaac, pursued a career in music.

As an artist, promoter and disc jockey of a new type of Spanish reggae music known as Reggaeton, Jaime was an up-and-coming star in New York's music scene. His meteoric rise came to a crashing halt on Feb. 9, 1992, when he was arrested and charged with the murder of Syracuse, New York, police officer Wallie Howard Jr., who was shot to death during a robbery while working a drug

operation undercover on Oct. 30, 1990.

"I can remember that call like it was yesterday, although it was really 29 years ago," Col. Davidson said during a recent interview, along with his wife of 36 years, Lidia. "Lidia and I were stationed in Colorado Springs. I was a second lieutenant assigned to the mission support squadron at Peterson Air Force Base when we got the call that my brother had been arrested. From that moment on, it's been quite a journey."

Although he successfully proved he was in Brooklyn at the time of the shooting in Syracuse, Jaime was convicted of playing a part in setting up the drug deal that went bad and was sentenced to three life sentences plus 85 years in federal prison.

Jaime has professed his innocence since 1990 and has had the full support of Isaac and the rest of the Davidson family since

his arrest. With the help of his family, Jaime fought his conviction in the years that followed, without success. Then, somewhat surprisingly, then-President Donald Trump commuted Davidson's sentence just days before Trump's term as president ended in mid-January.

After 29 years in some of the toughest federal prisons in the country, Jaime Davidson walked out of the Federal Correctional Institution in Williamsburg, South Carolina, as a free man on Jan. 20. It should be noted that several members of the Howard family and the Syracuse law enforcement community have condemned the commutation and still believe in Jaime's guilt.

For Isaac and Lidia, their strong Christian faith has been the foundation they have leaned on as they struggled along with, supported and prayed for Jaime throughout the last 29 years.

"This is a story of joy," Isaac said.

"We were so happy when we heard the news that Jaime was coming home, but we were able to get through the last 29 years when things weren't going right because we knew God was always in control," Lidia added. "He gave us strength."

Jaime said having his family's support was critical to his surviving nearly three decades behind bars.

"Knowing my family was always there for me was extremely critical, especially when I was just beginning this journey," he said. "I was a lost and confused 23-year-old young man facing three life sentences plus 85 years. Had I not had my family to talk to, to pray for me, to pray with me, I would never have been able to make it through."

Jaime said he would reflect on the words his mother told him immediately after his trial when times turned really difficult in prison. "She told me, 'a man is about to sentence you, not God. Whatever man gives you, God will take away. Hold on to these words. Your family is going to be with you every step of the way until you are once again free.'"

Isaac and Lidia first met at a Valentine's Day party at the Davidson home in 1981. They married in 1984, just as Isaac was beginning his Air Force career. They have three grown sons and two grandchildren. "My wife has been a Christian from her childhood. I became a Christian through her example," he said. "My faith has definitely helped me deal with Jaime's being in prison all of these years."

"I can remember listening to Isaac and Jaime on the phone over the years, praying for the police officers and their families, for the wardens, for the people he was in prison with," Lidia said. "Isaac told Jaime if he forgave all of these people, it would free him, not physically from the prison, but it would give him the freedom to not feel so bound. And I



Then-Capt. Isaac Davidson poses for a photo with his brother during a visit to see Jaime in prison in the early 1990s. Isaac and Jaime both credit their faith and their family with helping them make it through Jaime's long incarceration. (Courtesy photo)



By Bo Joyner

Finally free, Jaime, center, celebrates with his brothers, Rogelio and Isaac, and their wives, Evidelia and Lidia, outside the Federal Correctional Institution in Williamsburg, South Carolina, on Jan. 20. (Courtesy photo)



remember one particular phone call when I told Isaac, ‘It sounds to me like Jaime has lost all of the bitterness he has been carrying around for all of these years.’”

Isaac said the first few years were extremely tough on his younger brother. “There were some attempts on his life and he had to fight just to stay alive,” Isaac said. “Thankfully, he made it through those early years and he began to focus his attention on helping others following an inspirational and motivating talk with a prison official.”

In the years that followed, Jaime earned praise from prison officials for his dedication to helping others. He mentored and tutored more than 1,000 prisoners to help them earn their GED certificates. He was involved in several programs aimed at reducing gun violence and spoke to countless young people, encouraging them to be careful whom they associated with and to listen to their parents. He also studied the law and helped numerous prisoners with their cases, and helped raise money for several charitable causes, particularly mass shootings and natural disasters, while incarcerated.

“I’m really proud of Jaime for all of the people he has helped,” Isaac said. “There was one 11-year-old girl in particular convicted of murder whom he helped get freed from prison. He really has done a lot of good things for a lot of people over the years.”

“When I turned my attention to helping others, I was in my element,” Jaime said. “When I was organizing fund raisers, teaching or helping people with their court cases, I felt like I was free. That was a real turning point for me and was crucial to my being able to survive all these years behind the walls.”

From a resilience standpoint, the colonel said he has constantly leaned

on his faith and his family whenever he has needed help dealing with difficult situations, especially his brother’s incarceration. But, sometimes, he had to look for help in other places.

“One time, in particular, we had PCSed from Colorado to Panama,” Lidia said. “We were born and raised there, so it was great to be back in our home country. But Isaac, who was a young captain at the time, was going through a time of depression. We couldn’t figure out what was wrong. At the time, there was a big stigma associated with depression in the military and people were really hesitant about seeking help. But it got so bad that we had to do something, so Isaac finally went to the emergency room. The doctor didn’t prescribe any medication, but he really helped him get through that difficult time. He was exactly what Isaac needed.”

Isaac, Lidia and the rest of the Davidson family are currently helping Jaime as he transitions to life outside prison and continues to work to clear his name.

“He has a tough road ahead of him,” Isaac said. “He’s staying with family now. He still has a tendency to want to go to his room every night just before 9 o’clock because that’s what he has done every night for the last 29 years. When he went to prison, there were no cell phones, no flip phones, and now everything is done on a smart phone. The world has changed and he has a lot of adapting to do.”

The colonel said he encourages others to turn to their faith both when things are going well and when they are facing difficulties in life. “I would also encourage

people not to hold on to hate and bitterness,” he added. “It can eat away at both your mental and your physical health. Resilience is all about striving for the optimal me and bouncing back stronger from life’s difficult situations.”

The Air Force Reserve Chaplain corps enables resiliency by connecting Airmen, civilians and family members to available resources focused on mental health and spirituality, both key pillars of the Comprehensive Airman Fitness program.

“Your Chapel team can assist you with finding ways to practice your faith no matter what your background and belief,” said Chaplain (Col.) Charles Towery, AFRC’s command chaplain. “Research shows that people who participate in worship, read their faith’s scriptures/ traditions, and pray/meditate regularly are more resilient people. These people give leaders more of what they want and less of what they don’t want. Whether you are Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox or something else, your Chapel team stands ready to help.”

As AFRC’s Developing Resilient Leaders chief of strategy, Col. Davidson currently works closely with Brig. Gen. Tanya Kubinec, the command’s DRL champion, and Col. Hal Linnean, the DRL co-champion, to chart the course for one of AFRC’s three strategic priorities – developing resilient leaders. The other two strategic priorities are prioritizing strategic depth and accelerating readiness, and reforming the organization. *#ReserveResilient*

Breaking Barriers

Charleston defenders achieve pair of firsts

By Senior Airman Will Brugge



Two Airmen from Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, achieved major Air Force milestones as Reservists at the 315th Airlift Wing.

Senior Airman Sydney Lewandowski became the wing’s first female security forces Phoenix Raven, and Senior Airman Destiny Cooper became the wing’s first female security forces combat arms instructor.

Lewandowski graduated from her training course in March, and according to her, being first is always a top priority.

“One of my main drives for becoming a Phoenix Raven was being the first female from our base to accomplish it,” said Lewandowski, who serves with the 315th Security Forces Squadron. “I always wanted to be the tough girl, I always want to be the alpha.”

Lewandowski started her Air Force journey in December 2018 and balances being a student at the College of Charleston, as well as a part-time job, on top of her Air Force Reserve commitment.

Nearly two years into her Reserve career as a security forces member with the wing, Lewandowski decided that she would embark on the challenge of becoming the first female Phoenix Raven from the 315th.

The Phoenix Raven program, implemented in 1997, consists of teams of specially trained security forces personnel dedicated to providing security for Air Mobility Command aircraft transiting high terrorist and criminal threat areas.

Lewandowski said she always likes to be the toughest person in the room and that the physical and mental challenges of becoming a Phoenix Raven didn’t deter her in the slightest from pursuing the challenge.

“Going into the training, I thought that it was going to be more physically demanding than mentally demanding,” said Lewandowski. “While it turned out to be physically demanding, it turned out to challenge me much more mentally than I was prepared for.”

While Lewandowski said she still has to overcome the stigmas around the fact that she is a woman and a member of security forces in the Reserve, it hasn’t stopped her in the slightest toward reaching her true potential.

“Most people don’t know what to say when they find out that I’m a female and in security forces,” said Lewandowski. “They really don’t know what to say when they find out that I am a Raven and what the Ravens do.”

Cooper shared a similar path as Lewandowski in terms of career field. Cooper joined the Air Force Reserve in August 2017 and decided that after being trained as a security forces specialist, she would pursue becoming the first female combat arms instructor with the wing.

Cooper, who graduated from the combat arms instructor course in July 2020, said she believes all things are possible with a positive mental attitude.

“No one on the civilian side believes me when I tell them that I am a weapons instructor in the Air Force,” said Cooper, who also serves with the 315th Security Forces Squadron. “When they see a small-statured woman, they automatically disqualify me for that type of position.”

Cooper, who is also currently a college student, would like to become an officer in the future. She said that she didn’t let the stigma of being a woman and combat arms instructor stop her efforts of pursuing the career field.

“The biggest obstacles to overcome were the mental obstacles and stigmas placed around the job and being the first female at the base to do this, so there is a big standard,” said Cooper. “All eyes were on me and I knew I couldn’t mess up, so I put out max effort and graduated as a distinguished graduate.”

Cooper said her impact was felt immediately across her squadron, and she knew that she had set the bar high for those to come after her.

“We now have another female coming over to combat arms, and she told me that I was one of the reasons she pursued the career field,” said Cooper. “It was a wakeup call, but also motivating that other people are watching what I’m doing and that it is motivating them to step out of their comfort zones and achieve whatever they want to achieve.”

Lewandowski and Cooper both said they never allowed social norms or stigmas to stop them from carrying out their goals in the Air Force.

“I don’t think you can ever let a stigma or perception stop you from pursuing your dreams,” said Lewandowski. “You can accomplish anything you put your mind to.” *#ReserveResilient (Brugge is assigned to the 315th Airlift Wing public affairs office.)*

Senior Airman Sydney Lewandowski and Senior Airman Destiny Cooper train at the firing range at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. Lewandowski is a Phoenix Raven and Cooper is a combat arms instructor. Both are assigned to the 315th Security Forces Squadron.





An Arctic Ministry



IMA chaplain excited to serve at northernmost military installation

Chaplain (1st Lt.) Matthew Lanham, shown at left in front of the base chapel at Thule Air Base, Greenland, and at top outside the Wolstenhorne Fjord, is the Individual Mobilization Augmentee to the installation chaplain at Thule, which is the U.S. Armed Forces' northernmost installation. (Courtesy photos)

By Bo Joyner

When Chaplain (1st Lt.) Matthew Lanham completed the Air Force Reserve Chaplain Candidate Program in August, he anticipated his first assignment as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee chaplain would probably be close to the Washington, D.C. area where he lived and worked.

Turns out he was off by about 2,614 miles.

Nearing the end of his time as a chaplain candidate, Lanham began reviewing the list of available IMA assignments and was intrigued by one that said “IMA to the installation chaplain, 821st Air Base Group, Thule Air Base, Greenland.”

“It sounded like an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so I took a

few days to think about it,” Lanham, a Protestant chaplain, said. “I talked it over with my wife and then I volunteered to be the IMA chaplain for the 821st Air Base Group at Thule.”

Thule AB is the U.S. Space Force’s northernmost base, located 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle and 947 miles from the North Pole on the northwest coast of Greenland. Home to the 21st Space Wing’s global network of sensors providing missile warning, space surveillance and space control to North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Space Force, it’s also the U.S. Armed Forces’ northernmost installation.

Lanham recently wrapped up his first three-week tour of duty at Thule, which included a week of quarantine due to the

ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He spent two weeks shadowing and working with the full-time active-duty chaplain and the enlisted religious affairs Airman assigned to the 821st ABG.

“Thule is a small base with only a couple hundred military people and a few hundred contractors assigned, but it’s a location that requires a strong chaplain program,” he said. “The weather and the fact that this part of Greenland experiences 24 hours of darkness a day from October through February makes it an extremely difficult place to live and serve. They lean heavily on the chaplain for counseling, spiritual resiliency and other services.”

To say the weather at Thule is extreme would be a massive understatement.

For the year, the average high daily temperature is 18 and the average low is 6. During February, the average high is minus-5 and the average low is minus-19.

Lanham will be the IMA chaplain at Thule for three years. During that time, he’ll fill in when the full-time chaplain needs to get away for a week or two or has to be away on emergency leave.

“I’m super excited about this opportunity to serve,” Lanham, who works as a Department of Defense contractor in the F-35 Joint Program Office, serves as the associate pastor of the Mount Cavalry Community Church in Alexandria, Virginia, and is the community chaplain for Fairfax County, Virginia, as a civilian, said. “The rotator for Thule leaves out of Baltimore-Washington International Airport, so I can hop on the rotator and be there in about six and a half hours.”

Lanham holds the distinction of being the only IMA assigned to Thule. “Everybody’s heard the joke that IMA stands for ‘I’m alone,’ but for me that really is the case,” he said.

Lanham is also one of the first IMA chaplains assigned in direct support of U.S. Space Force and one the few Reserve Citizen Airmen who have ever been assigned to the 821st ABG chaplain’s office.

“The IMA billet at Thule has proven difficult to fill over the years,” said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Wade Matuska, the chief of the AFRC Chaplain Directorate’s Personnel and Readiness Division. “It takes the right kind of person. Chaplain Lanham interviewed really well, he has a strong military background, he knows how to travel and he lives close to the rotator location. We’re excited to have him in this slot and are confident he is going to do great things at Thule.”

Lanham originally enlisted in the Air Force in 2011 and served as a radio frequency transmission systems specialist until receiving his commission in the Reserve as a chaplain candidate in 2015. He completed his Master of Divinity

degree in 2019 and was reappointed as an IMA chaplain in August.

The Chaplain Candidate Program offers seminary and other professional religious school students an opportunity to evaluate their compatibility and potential for commissioning as an Air Force chaplain. The focus is on experiencing ministry in the Air Force during summer tours of active duty. For more information on the program, check out <https://afrc.af.mil/about-us/chaplain/chaplain-candidate/>. #ReserveResilient



Top, Lanham receives a note and coin from Col. David Hanson, 821st Air Base Group commander. Bottom, Lanham leads a Bible study inside the Thule community center. (Courtesy photos)

Since coming to the United States alone as a teenager, Lt. Col. (Dr.) Sandeep Gill has been robbed at gunpoint, endured poverty and lived out of his car to make ends meet. And he is grateful for every minute of it.

In fact, it was that sense of gratitude, and a love for his adopted country, that drove the 489th Bomb Group flight surgeon's future success and led him to a life in the Air Force Reserve. The 489th BG operates at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and is part of the 307th Bomb Wing, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana.

"It really goes back to the U.S. Constitution, because it creates a sense of justice," said Gill. "It empowers people to be citizens and that, philosophically speaking, is what got me here."

Gill arrived in Pennsylvania in 1985 to attend college, leaving his family behind in India. He hoped to become a nuclear physicist, but his father had other ideas.

"He said knowledge without wisdom and science without humanity is a social evil," said Gill. "He told me, 'You will heal people, that's what you will do.'"

Honoring his father's wish, Gill decided to become a doctor and quickly became obsessed with getting into medical school. He flourished in his undergraduate studies, developing an intense interest in molecular biology. But outside of school, life was beginning to unravel.

Back in India, Gill's father died. At the same time, political and social unrest was sweeping across the country and his family became the victims of violence and political persecution. Gill knew they would not be safe there and began to seek asylum for them in the U.S.

Gratitude at Gunpoint

Flight surgeon uses resiliency skillset to beat adversity

Story and photos by Senior Master Sgt. Ted Daigle



Lt. Col. (Dr.) Sandeep Gill, 489th Bomb Group flight surgeon, stands by a B-1 Lancer at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. Gill, who came to the United States in 1985 from India, decided to join the military after his family was allowed to remain in the country to escape political and religious persecution.



Poverty and Perseverance

Gill had to use his school savings to get his family to the United States. He decided to go to New York City to earn enough money to continue his education and began working at odd jobs, first at a restaurant, then at a gas station, where he was robbed at gunpoint on two different occasions. He ultimately found employment as a cab driver, a safer and better-paying job.

It was in New York that Gill, struggling to survive financially, decided to place a debt upon himself, one which would take decades to repay. His family had joined him in New York City, but their time to remain in the U.S. was limited if they were not granted political asylum. Without it, his family would be forced to go back to India and a very uncertain future.

So, when a judge signed an order allowing his family to stay safely in the U.S., something clicked inside Gill.

"I thought how awesome it was and decided, then and there, that one day I would join the military and pay this favor back," he said.

Gill moved to Texas to attend medical school, still very poor but determined to become a doctor. He could not afford to live anywhere, so he scraped together \$150 to buy an old car, using it for both transportation and housing.

"I basically showered at the gym, ate at the cafeteria and lived out of my car for a few months, but it was such a busy time I don't even remember how I got through it," he said. "Besides, I was young and thought gravity didn't apply to me."

Nothing could seem to stop Gill, not even when his old car broke down for the last time on his way to class.

"All I could do was kiss the hood and walk off," he said, laughing at the memory. "I had a pharmacology exam to get to!"

Paying back the last debt

Gill's perseverance paid off. He completed his final residency in 1997, nearly 12 years after coming to this country, but life went on and Gill established his oncology practice, started

Gill speaks to the first group of Reserve Citizen Airmen to take the first round of COVID-19 vaccinations at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, in February. Gill, who came to the United States as a teenager, used gratitude and perseverance in his resiliency skillset to become a doctor and join the Air Force Reserve.



raising a family and began doing research to fight cancer for his patients.

Financially he was doing well, but one debt remained. Gill had not forgotten the promise he'd made in that New York City courthouse the day his family was granted political asylum in the U.S. He was determined to serve his country.

Already a licensed pilot, Gill decided to join the Air Force Reserve. The decision to do so at age 45 caught many by surprise.

"My wife calls it my mid-life crisis," he said, breaking into a grin.

But the smile faded quickly as he recalled the decision to join despite his growing medical practice, on-going research and family obligations. He listened to all the objections. And he ignored them all.

"I felt like I had to join because of that promise I made," he said. "Who knows what would have happened to my family if they would have had to go back to India at that time?"

It took nearly two years of paperwork, prodding and pushing for Gill to finally earn his commission as a flight surgeon. As always though, he persevered, fulfilling the promise he'd made more than two decades earlier.

With several years of service and a Bomber Task Force deployment under his belt, Gill looked back on his decision to serve without any regret.

"When you believe in something, you just have to put your heart and soul into it and not worry about what the results will be," he said. "You just have to do what needs to be done."

#ReserveResilient

(Daigle is assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office.)

Up Close and Personal

Recruiters gather to learn all about McConnell, the KC-46 and the Wichita area

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Chance Babin

Air Force Reserve recruiters from across the central United States converged on McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, in April for a unique immersion to learn first-hand about the 931st Air Refueling Wing, the KC-46 Pegasus and the Wichita area.

Armed with what they learned, the recruiters assigned to the 352nd Recruiting Squadron went back to work better positioned to help the 931st meet its manning challenges.

“The visit from the 352nd recruiters marks just the beginning of our massive efforts to field the latest Air Force weapon system, the KC-46 Pegasus,” said Col. Phil Heseltine, 931st ARW commander. “With more than 300 vacancies, we could not meet our

conversion demands without their support.” The colonel said his entire team was extremely impressed by the support they received from the 352nd RCS.

“I can’t overstate the impact it had to bring them to McConnell AFB, and engage directly with our Wichita and Derby city leaders, Mayor Whipple and Mayor White, as well as seeing first-hand what an amazing place McConnell is for our Reserve Citizen Airmen to both live and serve,” he said. “Partnered with our active duty and Air National Guard wing leaders, Col. Rich Tanner, (22nd ARW commander), and Col. Jason Knobbe, (184th Wing commander), our 931st ARW team put on a world-class event that I believe should be the model for

other locations to emulate. Each recruiter left knowing what an Air Force crown jewel we have at McConnell Air Force Base.”

“Never underestimate the power of personal one-on-one connections,” said Lt. Col. Michael Rigoni, 352nd RCS commander. “Although we’ve been given tremendous IT (information technology) capability over the course of the last year, it doesn’t match having the power to speak eye-to-eye with another person, make a special connection, see an aircraft or training facility up close, or appreciate how incredible and complex in-flight refueling is at 20,000 feet. We collectively gained an entirely new level of appreciation for what the 931st ARW and Wichita, Kansas, have to offer.”

Lt. Col. Matt Basler, 931st Mission Support Group commander, served as the lead planner and focal point for this event. As the 931st ARW is in full conversion to the KC-46, the unit is growing by leaps and bounds.

“Roughly nine months ago, our leadership team recognized that we would need more Airmen to fulfill our mission. During a site visit with Lt. Col. Rigoni and Senior Master Sgt. Cole Chamberlain (the senior recruiter at McConnell), the three of us were discussing the unique jobs we had to offer – including boom operators,” Basler said. “As it was somewhat difficult to describe exactly what boom operators did, I recommended that Lt. Col. Rigoni and his team simply come out during a UTA and see it for themselves.”

Over the next several months, the two organizations had several conversations about how they could work together to increase mission readiness across the 931st ARW and ensure the KC-46 was primed for rapid global mobility – if given the call.

“This evolved into the opportunity for the 931st ARW to show recruiters firsthand what other jobs there were and where we were having difficulty in filling vacancies,” Basler said. “Most importantly, the event allowed us the opportunity to grow our relationship with the 352nd Recruiting Squadron – one we want to foster for years to come.”

Currently the 931st Maintenance Group has more than 90 vacancies for crew chiefs. Additionally, there are approximately 25 vacancies between two KC-46 avionics career fields, communication/navigation and integrated flight control system/guidance and control. They also have more than 15 vacancies in KC-46 aircraft hydraulic systems, and 10 vacancies in the aircraft electrical/environmental control systems career field.

The vacancies are primarily traditional Reserve positions, but there are opportunities to serve as an Air Reserve Technician.

“With the advent of the new weapon system, there are more than 300 newly added positions to support our expanding



A KC-46 Pegasus lowers the boom to refuel another KC-46 as part of a recruiting event hosted by the 931st Air Refueling Wing.

mission,” Heseltine said. “Everything from pilots to boom operators, to maintenance and mission support specialists.”

The 931st ARW is also experiencing significant growth in its security forces and civil engineering units.

“By flying with us, our recruiters can now speak from personal experience what an amazing capability the KC-46 brings and are ready to take this back to the next engagements with prospective Air Force recruits,” Heseltine said.

“This is the first time in the 12 years I have been in recruiting that I have seen something like this happen,” Chamberlain said. “This not only raised morale for the recruiters, I think it also raised morale for some of the Reservists who were able to show off what they get to do every day. For the recruiters, I believe it was an event that re-blued them. It’s not every day we get to see the end result of placing that new Airman in the wing.”

Event organizers also took advantage of the immersion to educate local ROTC cadets from Kansas State University Detachment 270 on the 931st mission.

“Several months ago, we learned that the active duty is not planning to commission as many officers as they originally programmed for,” Basler said. “This left many eager and passionate individuals who wanted to serve their country unsure of their future. Once we learned that there was a program to allow

ROTC cadets to commission directly into the Air Force Reserve, our wing commander saw an amazing opportunity to give these cadets hope.”

Seeing the opportunity to share with the cadets about opportunities to serve in the Air Force Reserve, the 931st ARW leadership and recruiting set up a visit for 37 cadets from KSU.

“We worked closely with Detachment 270th’s commander, Lt. Col. Garrett Hogan, to plan an event that would give cadets information on how they could still pursue their dreams in the Air Force,” Basler said. “What many people do not know is that the Air Force Reserve offers so many opportunities to young individuals – we simply needed to convey that information to the right crowd.”

While this immersion event was unique, Rigoni sees no reason it can’t be duplicated.

“I hope we can benchmark and reproduce events similar to this event at each of the other 38 wings and at each of our four recruiting squadrons in the Air Force Reserve,” he said. “Often overlooked, recruiting provides the Air Force Reserve first contact and interface in communities and bases all over the world. Recruiting is an important conduit and liaison between unit commanders, leaders and prospective new members.”

#ReserveReady #ReserveReform
(Babin is assigned to the Air Force Recruiting Service public affairs office.) ■



Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thames, Team Whiteman Recruiting flight chief, checks out the engine of a KC-46 Pegasus at the school house located at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas.



Tech. Sgt. Ian Michaelson, 931st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, gives a group of recruiters from the 352nd Recruiting Squadron a tour of the KC-46 Pegasus.



The 931st Air Refueling Wing hosted a recruiting event for a group of 352nd Recruiting Squadron recruiters to highlight the mission, local community and the need for more people at the unit.



Ground crews offload COVID-19 medical treatment supplies from a 433rd Airlift Wing C-5M Super Galaxy May 4, at the airport in New Delhi, India. Multiple U.S. Air Force aircraft moved the supplies from Travis Air Force Base, California. (Courtesy photo)

Ready to Help

Texas Reservists deliver critical medical supplies to India

By Lt. Col. Timothy Wade

A team of 17 Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 433rd Airlift Wing, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, delivered 48,000 pounds of critical supplies from the Defense Logistics Agency to Indian government officials in New Delhi, India, in early May.

The supplies were delivered in response to an official request by the Indian government to the U.S. State Department on April 24 for medical supplies and equipment to assist with the impacts of COVID-19 on the country. The supplies included

132,000 N95 masks and 545 oxygen concentrators. A total of four flights departed from Travis Air Force Base, California, delivering 1.6 million N95 masks, one million COVID-19 test kits and 545 oxygen concentrators.

The Air Force Reserve Command C-5M Super Galaxy crew consisted of Citizen Airmen assigned to the 68th and 356th Airlift Squadrons, the 433rd Operations Support Squadron, and the 433rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron who were initially assigned to a different mission.



Paul Martinez, a heavy equipment operator assigned to the 60th Aerial Port Squadron, moves oxygen tanks in a warehouse at Travis Air Force Base, California, April 27. The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, donated 440 oxygen cylinders and regulators, one million N95 masks and one million COVID-19 rapid diagnostic kits to help India fight COVID-19. (Courtesy photo)

“We were notified about the mission the day before we were to leave on a Pacific channel mission,” said Capt. Gary Koivisto, 433rd OSS instructor aircraft commander and mission commander. “The presidential-directed (special assignment airlift) mission was still in coordination the morning we were alerted to depart. When we found out the reason for the mission change, the crew was motivated to get into execution and deliver the aid.”

The opportunity to provide support to those in need was a common thread among the Citizen Airmen.

“I felt proud that the 433rd was trusted with the tasking to support this humanitarian mission to bring goodwill to the people of India,” said Senior Master Sgt. Ernest Urrutia, 68th AS evaluator flight engineer.

“I’m humbled and grateful for the opportunity to assist the people of India in any way we can,” said Senior Airman Roberto Garcia, 433rd AMXS flying crew chief.

Even though the aircrew encountered obstacles along the journey, such as having to do mission planning for a new and unfamiliar destination, the crew was undeterred in accomplishing the mission.

“The crew of ‘Reach 281’ did a phenomenal job executing this very high priority mission,” said Koivisto. “They overcame every hurdle that showed itself, and took them in stride, all while keeping the end goal of the mission in mind. AFRC and the 433rd AW should be very proud of the professionalism, dedication, and accomplishments of their Airmen.”

#ReserveReady
 (Wade is assigned to the 433rd AW public affairs office.)



433rd Airlift Wing Reserve Citizen Airmen work with ground crews at the airport in New Delhi, India, to offload COVID-19 medical treatment supplies from a U.S. Air Force C-5M Super Galaxy. (Courtesy photo)

Expanding Capabilities

414th Fighter Group leads flying ops for the first time



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Bruch

For the first time since being established at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, the 414th Fighter Group led training operations during its unit training assembly in March.

In an effort to expand capabilities, the 414th FG, a subordinate unit to the 944th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, successfully launched four F-15E Strike Eagle training sorties on Saturday of the UTA. The effort involved members of the 414th Maintenance Squadron, 307th Fighter Squadron and the 4th Fighter Wing's 336th Fighter Squadron.

"Weekend flying for our Total Force Integration team exercises strategic capacity germane to the association at Seymour Johnson," said Col. Jason Reiss, 414th FG commander. "By leveraging Reservists on Saturday, the 4th FW gains additional O&M [Operation and Maintenance] flying opportunities while simultaneously harnessing our Reserve experience to instruct aircrew and maintain Strike Eagles."

The idea originated three months ago at the base gym in a conversation between Reiss and Col. Kurt Helphinstine, 4th FW commander, during a morning workout.

"[Helphinstine] initiated the conversation by asking me what I thought about the group executing weekend flying," said Reiss. "Based off the COAs [Courses of Action] the TFI maintenance and operation team

presented, Helphinstine asked that we start weekend flying quarterly for the remainder of the fiscal year.

In a location where TFI between Reserve and active duty is essential to how the Air Force trains the next generation of fighter pilots and weapons systems officers, leadership recognized an area of opportunity for expanding individual unit capabilities.

"The 414th FG provides depth in both operations and maintenance that significantly contribute to 4th FW sortie generation, making us more lethal and ready," said Helphinstine. "The active duty and Reserve relationship at Seymour Johnson AFB is unrivaled."

Seeking opportunities to optimize training is a priority as members of the TFI team continue to look toward the future.

"If the active duty wing deploys for six months or a year, we still need to keep training pilots and weapons systems officers," said Maj. Gabriel Gassie, a maintenance operations officer with the 414th MXS and F-15E instructor pilot with the 307th FS. If we can give the active duty some time off, this will also alleviate the strain of



Left, Maj. Skyler "Bull" Collins, an instructor pilot with the 307th Fighter Squadron, signals to his crew chief that he is good to go while preparing to conduct a training sortie at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, in March. In an effort to expand capabilities, members of the 414th Fighter Group, an Air Force Reserve component, were conducting training operations without their active-duty counterparts during the weekend unit training assembly. Below, Capt. Wayne "Shady" Collins, a weapons system officer with the 306th Fighter Squadron, conducts a walk around pre-flight inspection of an F-15E Strike Eagle.

having to ask their personnel to work on our drill weekends."

By doing this, the Reserve component, specifically the Airmen of the 414th MXS, will be responsible for all phases of launching, recovering and regenerating the aircraft.

"This is a huge milestone for our guys," said Maj. Michael McConnell, 414th MXS commander. "This is exercising our Reserve strategic capacity within the 4th Fighter Wing to generate, fly and regenerate aircraft."

The Reserve component did just that, launching four successful training sorties. In addition to a successful launch, the men and women of the 414th

MXS were able to give the jets back to their active duty counterparts on Monday morning with all maintenance issues resolved and the jets cleared to fly.

Leading the effort on the maintenance side was Master Sgt. Jason Hochbrueckner, production superintendent with the 414th MXS.

"Everyone executed flawlessly," said Hochbrueckner. "The jets did not cooperate, but that is the nature of the beast. This is what we train for. This is why we practice. Everyone executed to a 'T'."

The 414th FG is scheduled to continue TFI initiatives during the next UTA with their active-duty counterparts. The development of the autonomous capability is one both organizations seek to grow. For now, they will continue to exercise this capability on a quarterly basis as they train and equip the next generation of fighter pilots and weapons system officers of the U.S. Air Force.

"This is yet another example of how the TFI association is evolving at Seymour and demonstrates the synergies a well cultivated TFI relationship achieves for the Air Force," concluded Reiss. "In the long term, flexing the Reserve muscle in this capacity postures Seymour uniquely to simultaneously conduct a future major combat operation while maintaining its formal training mission by leveraging the 414th's strategic capacity." #ReserveReady

(Bruch is assigned to the 944th Fighter Wing public affairs office.)

1. Tech. Sgt. Ken White, 919th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, prepares tools and parts needed to install a new propeller on a C-146A Wolfhound, as part of a special maintenance training program at Duke Field, Florida. 2. Senior Airman Chris Peterson tightens bolts on a new propeller mounted on a C-146A Wolfhound.



3. Reservists with the 919th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron prepare to mount a new propeller on a C-146A Wolfhound as part of a special maintenance training program. The program is designed to create maintenance specialists who operate interchangeably in deployed locations, keeping crews smaller and saving the Air Force money and manpower. The propeller swap gave Reserve maintenance specialists the opportunity for hands-on training and experience.



Making Mech-Techs

Duke Field maintainers implement innovative training program



Story and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Johnathan McCallum

Accomplishing missions any time, any place is standard for the Citizen Air Commandos assigned to the 919th Special Operations Wing, Duke Field, Florida. Reserve Citizen Airmen with the 919th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron are implementing new training to ensure that standard is met with an innovative program that delivers expert maintenance in smaller crews at smaller cost to the Air Force.

“The Mech-Tech Initiative is a new program we implemented to make a smaller footprint in the area of responsibility,” said Senior Master Sgt. Paul Greene, 919th SOAMXS flight chief. “We’re creating members that

are cross qualified in four maintenance specialties so we can deploy half the amount of people than we normally would.”

By reducing personnel, crews can operate in small, austere locations with less chance of being noticed by an enemy. One or two expert maintenance technicians instead of four also results in a lower cost associated with each mission.

The squadron-designed program gives qualified crew chiefs, avionics specialists, jet propulsion mechanics and electrical/environmental mechanics knowledge and practical training in each other’s career fields. Combined with the 919th Special Operations Maintenance Squadron, the

SOAMXS uses hands-on training with aircraft to create well-rounded mechanics and technicians, or “mech-techs”. These specialists are then capable of performing a wider range of maintenance tasks.

The first Airmen in the program replaced a worn propeller that served maximum flight hours on a C-146A Wolfhound for their first training event.

“We developed a curriculum for 60 days of hands-on and classroom training,” said Staff Sgt. Andrew Roberts, 919th SOAMXS engine propulsion mechanic and instructor for the course. “During the first month, we’ll accomplish aircraft maintenance needs that meet skill-level tasks for all the career fields.”



The Mech-Tech initiative illustrates how the Wolfhound maintenance community is implementing Air Force Special Operations Command’s strategy of equipping human capital to modernize capabilities through innovation and experimentation. The program also supports AFSOC’s commitment to tackling complex challenges and divesting unnecessary overhead in favor of a sustainable and tailorable fighting force.

Leadership will re-evaluate training at the end of the course and adjust as needed before the second class begins. The goal is to qualify new members and provide fully capable “mech-techs” by the end of 2022. This future training initiative will integrate traditional Reservists, Air Reserve Technicians and active-duty Airmen from the 592nd SOMXS.

“We plan to have everyone qualified at roughly the same time,” said Greene.

4. Peterson inspects connections on a new propeller mounted on a C-146A Wolfhound, as Staff Sgt. Andrew Roberts, 919th SOAMXS engine mechanic, looks on from below as an instructor. 5. Roberts wipes down a part before a new propeller is installed on a C-146A Wolfhound.

“We’re spreading it out so we can ensure a Total Force Integration with our active-duty brethren. The goal is for us all to be mechs and techs by the end of it. #ReserveReady #ReserveReform (McCallum is assigned to the 919th Special Operations Wing public affairs office.)

Reforming the Fighter World

By Jamal Sutter

Reserve Airman makes history with innovative F-35 project

Senior Airman Aaron Hooks, an F-35A Lightning II dedicated crew chief assigned to the 57th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, cleans the canopy of an F-35A at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, in 2019. A recent ground test conducted at Nellis proved that Air Force personnel could safely and securely livestream F-35 data directly from the aircraft's mission systems computers to a connected computer tablet. (Airman 1st Class Bryan Guthrie)

For the first time ever, Air Force personnel livestreamed F-35 data directly from the aircraft's mission systems computers to a connected computer tablet during a ground test in late March, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

The event was a milestone for the Fighter Optimization eXperiment (FOX), a project that seeks to rapidly integrate advanced software and hardware technologies to maximize the F-35's lethality and survivability, while creating an agile development test tool and fielded combat multiplier for all Department of Defense aircraft.

"In order to stay competitive, we have to innovate," said Lt. Col. Raven "Rost" LeClair. "It's as simple as that. We are trying to find ways to go faster for less money, to bring more capability per dollar, and to push more capabilities to the warfighter more quickly. We want to shift timelines from capabilities being fielded in years to being fielded in a matter of months or weeks; both hardware and software."

LeClair is a test flight commander stationed at Edwards Air Force Base, California, with the 370th Flight Test Squadron, a unit assigned to Air Force Reserve Command's 413th Flight Test Group, Robins AFB, Georgia. He's also the F-35 command chief instructor test pilot with the 461st FLTS, an active-duty unit at Edwards, and one of the main players within Project FoX.

With the ground test, the Project FoX test team proved they could successfully take data output from a flight test instrumentation system and convert the F-35's data to communicate with mobile applications running on a commercial tablet. Two apps were tested to demonstrate the idea.

One app, the Battlefield Management Portal, was developed by a team from the 309th Software Maintenance Group out of Hill AFB, Utah, and presents surface-to-air threat information in a new format designed to maximize pilot effectiveness in the suppression of air defenses mission of the F-35. The second app, developed by Lockheed Martin's Advanced Development Programs branch, introduces the concept of advanced artificial intelligence to increase the F-35's advantages against advanced surface-to-air threats.

Many entities played a part in either managing or assisting the test in some capacity, including a Project FoX government software development team from the 309th SMXG, F-35 maintainers and 59th Test and Evaluation Squadron instrumentation lab specialists out of Nellis, a team from Lockheed Martin and cyber security specialists from the F-35 Joint Program Office. Lt. Col. Mike Selzter, a leader with Nellis' Defense Innovation Unit and a co-designer of one of the tested tablet apps, operated the cockpit during the test.

Project FoX was conceived by the 461st FLTS's Future Technology Team, led by U.S Marine Corp. F-35 pilot, Maj. Jason "Strap" Schulze. The team was formed with the mission of pursuing advanced aerospace technology and rapid innovation for the F-35, with Project FoX being one of the main vessels in attaining that goal. Together, Schulze and LeClair came up with the concept and roadmap for Project FoX after identifying capability gaps between the vision for agile software development and reality.

Getting Project FoX from concept to reality took many months of coordination and planning, much of which were

overseen by LeClair. However, he wasn't short on help. The F-35 JPO research and technology team, who assisted in the approval process of Project FoX, immediately recognized the potential of an integrated tablet to accelerate testing and fielding of combat capabilities. And the 309th SMXG led the development of the software and provided critical leadership during the ground test, proving the true power and distributed leadership of the Project FoX team.

With the test happening at Nellis, approximately 200 miles away from the team at Edwards, they placed their trust in the other members of the distributed team. LeClair said all he could do was wait patiently and stand by for updates, confident he had innovative and resourceful leaders on the ground making it happen.

"I was definitely nervous and anxious that we were not going to be successful," he said. "I was very confident that the team would at least learn something that would be able to carry us forward. In my mind, failures are always on the path to success."

A day prior to the successful run, the team faced some issues that prevented them from being able to read data from the aircraft. However, after a few hours back in the software lab adjusting application code, they figured it out. The critical and agile software change worked and was enabled by the F-35 JPO cyber team being on site to participate in the testing, a precedent in regards to capability development.

Though this initial test was fielded on the F-35, the ambitions for Project FoX reach far beyond just the Lightning II. Its all-encompassing intent is to eventually optimize capabilities for every DoD platform through state-of-the-art methods, combat autonomous toolsets, and hardware and software solutions. Ultimately, the team seeks to transform the combat capability

acquisition landscape by making the best tools in the industry and government available to any combat platform through a DoD Combat App Store and cockpit-integrated tablet, LeClair said.

"By opening up the opportunity for innovation, proven in the commercial sector app stores, we can bring the very best combat tools to the warfighter — customized and truly agile combat capability development where fixes can be pushed in days not months," he said. "It also opens up a whole new world of opportunity for live-fly modeling and simulation. We will be able to find software bugs that escape the lab sooner and fix them faster, rapidly integrate AI tools that could never be run on the actual aircraft due to hardware limitations, provide unprecedented cyber-attack awareness and protection, and crowd source testing on multiple platforms."

"There is no reason why I can't test the same capability and app on F-18 before F-35 or risk reduce software on F-35 for use by unpiloted aircraft. By connecting a tablet to an aircraft's data bus, the warfighter and tester will be able to utilize an entire DoD Combat App store of tools, customized to help solve tactical problems in real time."

The idea of Project FoX traces back to U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Mathias Winter's vision of the F-35 that he set near the end of the aircraft's first 10 years of flight test. Winter, the then F-35 program executive officer who oversaw the aircraft's development, imagined the aircraft being able to automatically download updates and new features overnight, similarly to an iPhone or Tesla.

"That is the vision he set out for us, which is a very challenging and inspiring mission, given how complex the aircrafts is," said Lt. Col. James Valpiani, 461st FLTS



The Fighter Optimization eXperiment (FoX) is a project that seeks to rapidly integrate advanced software and hardware technologies to maximize the F-35's lethality and survivability, while creating an agile development test tool and fielded combat multiplier for all DoD aircraft.



Lt. Col. Raven LeClair, 370th Flight Test Squadron test flight commander and 461st FLTS F-35 command chief instructor test pilot, fields questions from a panel of six judges during the Spark Tank Innovation Showcase (Giancarlo Casem)

commander and F-35 integrated test force director. “It has tens of millions of lines of code. And, of course, it’s different than an iPhone or Tesla in that people are trying to shoot it down. It is a very complex aircraft with a very complex mission and an adversarial mission. To incorporate agile development into that cycle has been the work of the last two years.”

The 461st FLTS’s Future Technology Team manifested around April of 2019, and when it came time to choose someone to lead the way, Valpiani said he knew no better person for the job.

“Rost has always, for me, been the epitome of someone with an innovative spirit,” Valpiani said. “He has an incredible talent of thinking outside the container, questioning why we do things the way we do and imagining different and better ways to do them. It’s in his DNA to think and act boldly in the pursuit of innovation. So that’s part of the reason — I mean it’s not part of the reason — it is the reason why I asked him to take on the Future Technology Team position and the FoX tablet specifically.”

Within about half a year, the Future Technology Team was ready to present their Project FoX concepts and in January of 2020, the team’s idea was one of the winning presentations during Edwards’ Spark Tank competition. The Edwards Spark Tank competition is based on the larger service-wide campaign that allows Airmen to present innovation ideas to key agencies in order to garner support and funding.

With any revolutionary idea, however, the door is always open for pushback or disapproval, which could lead to hurdles that slowdown progression. Luckily for the Project FoX team, they received little to no negative feedback on what they are trying to do.

“We have tremendous support from combat aviators,” LeClair said. “They want this, and they want it yesterday. Everybody who’s ever flown with an electronic flight bag ... all understand the utility of this. And everyone understands the need to go faster and to innovate at a pace that we cannot do in our current method of software development.”

F-35 pilots already fly with tablets in the cockpit, but plugging the tablet into the aircraft is a new idea being pioneered by Edwards, Nellis and Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in California, he said. Realizing the concerns about safety and security, they started off with just a ground test. The team wanted to prove they could safely connect to the aircraft without interference to the jet’s systems. From a security standpoint, they wanted to prove they didn’t add additional risk.

Also in the works within Project FoX is the FoX BoX. The FoX BoX is slated to contain a cyber-secure chip set designed by a team conducting mission systems testing on the F-18 at NAWS China Lake, just 60 miles north of Edwards. The FoX BoX will run high-level, AI-capable computer processors that will serve as an operating system to communicate to aircraft, allowing the FoX Tablet to function mainly as a visual interface for aircrew.

From here, the team will continue to conduct ground tests to perfect data ingestion on the F-35. They will also soon start testing on the F-18, F-16 and F-22 to prove that Project FoX’s universal concepts are truly compatible with any platform. Eventually, Project FoX capabilities will be tested during flight, hopefully later this year.

“We want to execute in baby steps and a build-up approach,” LeClair said. “As with any new capability, we want to do it safely, securely and effectively.”

Prior to transitioning to the Air Force Reserve in 2018, LeClair held his current F-35 instructor pilot position with the 461st FLTS in an active-duty capacity. He became an Active Guard Reserve (AGR) member and joined the 370th FLTS but remained attached to the 461st as well, maintaining a certain amount of stability within the unit.

“In the active-duty [Air Force], our pilots rotate out on a regular basis every two to three years,” Valpiani said. “It’s difficult to develop real depth of expertise in a platform, especially one as complex as the F-35, in that period. So the challenge that we face is making sure we have a few key cadre in the squadron who can serve as continuity, depth of experience, wisdom — the old hats if you will — who can train new people and give insight to the active-duty force.”

LeClair was the first AGR test pilot hired by the 370th FLTS, and according to Lt. Col. John Mikal, 370th FLTS commander, he is a great example of what the Air Force Reserve can bring to the table in a Total Force environment.

“What’s interesting and positive about him being an AGR, is that he’s had the bandwidth to do that,” Mikal said. “He’s doing a leadership job in the 370th as a flight commander, but [Project FoX] is his number one task, and it allows him to do that. I think that’s why they’ve had success.” #ReserveReady #ReserveReform

(Sutter is assigned to the 413th Flight Test Group public affairs office.) ■



Reserve Advisors bridge gap between commands

By Staff Sgt. Tara R. Abrahams

Individual Mobilization Augmentees fulfill unique roles in the Air Force. Instead of being assigned to traditional Reserve units, these Airmen work directly for active-duty organizations. For this unique type of assignment to be successful, IMAs and their active-duty counterparts need to understand each other's worlds. That's where Reserve Advisors can help.

Reserve Advisors work full time as Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) members in major commands, combatant commands, defense agencies and other large organizations. Their position is the focal point for communication and collaboration between the Air Force Reserve and the active-duty command leadership, explained Col. Austin A. Moore, Reserve Advisor to the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

"It's really about advising each organization - Air Force Reserve Command and SOCOM, or AFRC and whatever organization that Reserve Advisor is at - on policy, guidance and resources relative to Reserve forces," Moore said.

Moore is one of more than 60 Reserve Advisors in the Air Force Reserve. They advise the commanders on all aspects of the Reserve's integration with the active component, including mobilization, Military Personnel Appropriation orders, Inactive Duty Status, and IMAs who are assigned to their respective organizations.

In addition to their core duties, the RA may provide mentoring, evaluation, promotion and career development guidance for IMAs.

"I rely on my Reserve Advisors to serve as the connective tissue between the Air Force Reserve and the active component," Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, AFRC commander, recently said about the importance of RAs. "This program is instrumental in maintaining the effectiveness of the Total Force and ensures synchronization between the two components."

As a prior enlisted Airman himself, Moore said he would have loved to have an officer he could call for help.

"I'm in SOCOM every single day, so I'm able to act as that barometer for change to give early warning for changes that might affect AFRC and the IMAs that are supporting," he said.

Prior to working as a Reserve Advisor, Moore was a pilot for SOCOM. He said this is an added benefit because it allows him to "speak the language" of the command, and easily relay information as it comes.



Col. Austin Moore, the Reserve Advisor to U.S. Special Operations Command, meets with Master Sgt. Lisa McGrath, a SOCOM Individual Mobilization Augmentee, at McDill Air Force Base, Florida. (Master Sgt. Barry Loo)

Additionally, Moore talked about how his position benefits Reservists in a more individualized manner. While IMAs should always seek assistance from their unit Reserve coordinators and detachments first, the Reserve Advisor can offer IMAs perspective and explain the bigger picture from the standpoint of national defense.

"It's important to know how you [the IMA] contribute to the grand strategy and how you can offer some ways you can contribute more," the colonel said.

"I'm not a commander; I am not the IMA's supervisor or manager, so I can simply be there to leverage my experience and my rank in support of the Reservists," he said. "If I can now, from my position, be that person that is able to support our IRs, I'm happy to do it."

Col. Amy Boehle is the commander of HQ RIO, the organization that supports IMAs with Reserve-specific finance and personnel functions.

"The Reserve Advisors provide an invaluable conduit between the Reserve leadership and the active component," she said. "Their work is critical to the active component's mission and it's important for our IMAs to know they're there as an additional resource."

Moore said it is extremely rewarding to provide guidance to IMAs and is proud to be able to do it. His advice to the Airmen is simply one of encouragement for growth.

"Seek out mentoring. Ask questions. If you don't understand where you fit in to the big puzzle, ask your Reserve Advisor. They should have the operational relevance to answer that question for you. Don't hesitate to do that. Make the Reserve Advisor a part of your professional development." #ReserveReady *(Abrahams is assigned to the HQ RIO public affairs office.)* ■

A KC-46A Pegasus assigned to the 916th Air Refueling Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, sits on the flightline at Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania. The KC-46A was brought to Pittsburgh to allow members of the 911th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron to familiarize themselves with the aircraft to prepare for real-world missions. (Joshua J. Seybert)

